

**THE NEW SPATULA**

by Fred Coppersmith

DEREK is seated at a table. Whatever he might be doing beneath it is hidden from view. Enter HELEN, who is obviously looking for something.

HELEN

Derek, honey, have you seen the new spatula? It's not in the kitchen, and I wanted to --

Pause. HELEN looks suspiciously at DEREK.

HELEN

What were you doing?

DEREK looks up, nervously, as if interrupted in the middle of something.

DEREK

What? Nothing! When? I wasn't --

HELEN

Just now, when I came in. It looked like maybe you were --

Pause.

HELEN

Oh God, Derek, no. You weren't!

DEREK

What? No! Wasn't what?!

HELEN

Oh my God, you were. Damn it, Derek! You were whacking off again, weren't you?

DEREK laughs nervously.

DEREK

What? No! No I wasn't! What -- what are you talking about? I was just --

HELEN

You were. You were whacking off into the French onion dip again, weren't you? Damn it, Derek, you *promised*!

DEREK

Helen, I swear, I wasn't! I was just sitting here! It's not what it looks like -- Really, I didn't --

DEREK sighs. The jig is up. He pulls the jar of onion dip from beneath the table.

DEREK

Yeah okay... Fine, yeah, you caught me, I admit it. I -- well, you don't understand, Helen. It's just...well, it's just so *creamy!*

HELEN

Goddamn it, Derek. How many times does this have to happen before --

Pause.

HELEN

Oh God. Is that my coleslaw under there, too?

DEREK

Your what?

HELEN

My coleslaw. It is! Goddamn it, Derek, you *know* I made that especially for my parents. They'll be here in half an hour! Pause.

DEREK

I should probably zip up then, huh?

HELEN

Yes, Derek, you probably should zip up then! My God, what is *wrong* with you? Why must you do this every time we invite people over?

DEREK

Oh c'mon, it's not every time, Helen. A couple of barbecues -- *one bar mitzvah* -- that's it. And...well you know my weakness for sliced cabbage. It was just sitting there in the fridge. I couldn't help it. I was like a man possessed.

HELEN

Great. And so now the coleslaw's ruined. No dip, no coleslaw. What am I supposed to serve with the chicken?

DEREK

Oh come on, Helen, it's not really *ruined*, is it?

DEREK puts the coleslaw on the table.

DEREK

I mean...you could always just tell them it's extra mayonnaise.

A look of outrage and disgust crosses Helen's face.

HELEN

Ew! No! No, I will *not* tell my parents that your semen is extra mayonnaise! My God, Derek, that's disgusting!

DEREK

I'm just saying, Helen...your mother really *likes* mayonnaise...

HELEN

Oh God, stop it! No! We are *not* having this conversation! We are going to throw the coleslaw away and pretend like this never happened! Maybe then we get through the afternoon and figure out --

HELEN pauses, looks angrily at DEREK, whose mind has been drifting.

HELEN

Goddamn it, Derek. You're thinking about that damn onion dip again, aren't you?

DEREK

(distractedly)

What? Oh. Yeah...

(laughs halfheartedly)

Yeah, I guess I was. I didn't mean to, Helen, it's just...well, you have to understand, it's just so smooth and creamy! It's like heaven in a jar!

HELEN

I don't want to hear it, Derek. You know, I thought the therapy was really helping this time. I thought with the new medication and everything... I mean, you *said* you were going to make an honest effort to change.

DEREK

I know, Helen, but...well, you heard what Dr. Schafer said. I can't be held responsible for my actions.

HELEN

Derek, Dr. Schafer is the dog's veterinarian.

Long pause.

DEREK

Well then he really shouldn't be examining people, now should he?

HELEN

He only did that because you bullied him into it!

DEREK

I most certainly did not!

HELEN

Yes you did! My God, Derek, you threatened to have him deported! You said you would expose as a Soviet spy!

Pause.

DEREK

Well the man *is* a Communist, Helen! There's no getting around that. But I never bullied him! I *might* have raised my voice a little. But, c'mon, I thought he was going to chop my *balls* off, okay? I mean, he did it to Sparky!

HELEN

Because Sparky's a *dog*, Derek!

DEREK

Oh, and I suppose that makes it okay.

HELEN sighs loudly, throws up her hands.

HELEN

You know, Derek, fine, forget it, okay? I refuse to be dragged into this any further. I don't have time for this. I have to figure out what I'm going to serve with lunch now that the coleslaw is gone.

DEREK

I still think your parents would understand.

HELEN

No! No, they would *not* understand!

(sighing)

God! Now, please, wipe yourself off and throw the coleslaw away. I don't want to see it or that onion dip ever again, do you understand? I'll be in the kitchen.

HELEN starts to walk off-stage. DEREK calls after her.

DEREK

Well then you might want to throw away the macaroni salad, too, while you're in there. You know, just to be safe...

Pause. HELEN stops, turns, sighs loudly.

HELEN

Is there anything else I should know about, Derek? Hmm? Anything at all? What about the pickle relish? You didn't sexually molest the *pickle relish*, did you?

DEREK

Okay, now I think you're just overreacting, sweetheart.

HELEN

Oh, I'm sorry, is that what I was doing? *Overreacting*? Well, gosh, Derek, I'm sorry. I guess with my parents coming and you treating our refrigerator like a sex toy, I just went and lost my pretty little head! What was I thinking?

DEREK

And now you're mad...

HELEN

Yeah, Derek, now I'm mad. Far be it from me to try and pull the wool over your eyes. And do you know *why* I'm mad, Derek? Huh? Huh? Have you pieced together *that* little mystery yet? I'm mad because right now -- do you know what I have to go and do right now? I have to go back into the kitchen and figure out which of our groceries my husband has or has not been masturbating into! My God! And I *still* don't know where the damn spatula is!

DEREK

It's probably just somewhere in the kitchen, Helen.

HELEN

It is *not* in the kitchen, Derek!! Believe me, I have *looked* in the kitchen! Don't tell me it's somewhere in the kitchen, because it is *not*, okay? My parents will be here any minute now, and I know they're going to ask about it! I just know it!

DEREK

Helen, c'mon, they're not going to ask about it. It's just a spatula.

HELEN

It is not just a spatula, Derek. Not to them.

(sighing)

You don't understand. You don't know my parents the way I do. My mother got very excited when I told her we'd bought a new spatula the other day. She said she and Daddy just *had* to come over and see it right away.

DEREK

*That's* why they're coming over? To see a *spatula*?

HELEN

Well they don't get out very much anymore. This is sort of a big deal for them.

DEREK

But it's a spatula.

HELEN

A spatula which I can't seem to find anywhere, thank you very much. Are you sure we brought it back with us from the store? Are you sure you didn't...well, you know, do something to it?

DEREK

What do you mean, do something to it? You don't think I would -- oh God, Helen! No! With the spatula? That's disgusting!

HELEN

Well don't forget that time you took our meat thermometer and shoved it straight up your --

DEREK

Once, Helen! Just once! And I don't remember hearing you complain when I started to rub the steak sauce all over your --

HELEN

Okay! Okay, Derek! Fine, you made your point! But let's not forget which one of us ejaculated into the coleslaw earlier today. I mean, c'mon! Let's try to keep some perspective here. That's not really what I would call normal behavior.

DEREK

I know, Helen, I know, but...well it's just --

The phone rings.

HELEN

Oh great. The phone.  
(sighing)  
Now what?

Exit HELEN, just off-stage. She continues to talk, but on the phone.

HELEN

Hello? Oh hi there! Yeah. Yeah. What? Oh. Really? Are you sure you don't -- Oh. Okay, yeah. Yeah, yeah, I guess so.

No, no, that's all right. Yeah. Yeah, I love you, too. Okay. Bye.

HELEN hangs up the phone and re-enters. She looks a bit mystified.

DEREK

Who was that?

HELEN

That was my mother. Apparently they're not coming.

DEREK

They're not coming? Why not?

HELEN

She said... She said they had decided to appear in another sketch.

DEREK

Another sketch?

HELEN

She said she was sorry to call at the last minute like this, but...well, they thought this sketch had run on a little too long and so they'd agreed to appear in different one.

DEREK

Huh. Well that's unusual.

HELEN

I know. They might stop by sometime tomorrow morning, though. They really do want to see that spatula.

DEREK

You know, I think I might have seen it in the dining room earlier...

HELEN

Really?

DEREK

Yeah, when I was getting the onion dip. I think it might be on top of the china cabinet.

HELEN

Well that would be nice. She seemed *really* interested. I'll go check!



Exit HELEN. Long pause. DEREK looks around to make sure no one is watching.

DEREK  
(addressing the dip)  
Well then, Mr. Onion Dip. Alone at last!

FADE OUT.